

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for ablating or irradiating a tumor in a body while protecting a nearby structure from the effects of the ablation, comprising the steps of:

5 inserting an ablation device to a location in the body proximate the tumor, the ablation device having at least one ablation source;

interposing an ablation shield, which is provided as a member separate from the ablation device, between the tumor and the nearby structure; and then

10 activating the ablation source device to ablate the tumor while the nearby structure is shielded by the ablation shield.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

imaging at least a region including and surrounding the tumor; and

5 guiding the ablation device toward the tumor based on the imaging.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one ablation source is a plurality of wires, the wires being activated to emit radio-frequency current from their tips to create heat to ablate the tumor.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the ablation shield is interposed percutaneously.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

imaging at least a region including and surrounding the tumor and the nearby structure; and

5 guiding the ablation shield to a position between the tumor and the nearby structure based on the imaging.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

imaging at least a region including and surrounding the tumor and the nearby structure;

5 guiding the ablation device toward the tumor based on the imaging; and

guiding the ablation shield to a position between the tumor and the nearby structure based on the imaging.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the ablation shield is a balloon.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of inflating the balloon with a fluid after the balloon is interposed between the tumor and the nearby structure and prior to activation of the at least one ablation source.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of selecting the fluid to inflate the balloon from a group consisting of air, carbon dioxide and deionized water.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of selecting the fluid based on the type of ablation source.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of constructing the ablation shield to increase a distance between the tumor and the nearby structure when interposed therebetween.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of constructing the ablation shield from a material which serves as a shielding material to counteract the effects of the at least one ablation source.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the ablation shield is a fan retractor having an expandable fan portion folded upon interposition of the fan retractor between the tumor and the nearby structure, further comprising the step of expanding the 5 fan portion after the fan retractor is interposed between the tumor and the nearby structure and prior to activation of the at least one ablation source.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of selecting the orientation of the fan retractor such that the fan portion expands either to push the nearby structure away from the tumor or to cause a substantial part of the fan portion to be present between the tumor and the nearby structure.

15. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the fan portion expands to causes a substantial part of the fan portion to be present between the tumor and the nearby structure, further comprising the step of selecting the material of the fan portion to counteract the effects of the at least one ablation source.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein treatment of the tumor requires multiple, sequential treatments, and the method further comprises:

marking an only a first partial area of the tumor that
5 is treated by the ablation; and

performing at least one subsequent treatment on the tumor
based on the marked area of the tumor.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein
the ablation and the subsequent treatment performed on the tumor
are radiofrequency ablations performed using a needle probe as
the ablation device, and the step of marking the area of the
5 tumor comprises placing a radio-opaque material at a location at
ends of wires of the needle probe.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein
each instrument used to perform the ablation is provided with a
different signature that is visible during imaging performed
during the ablation.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18, wherein
each said instrument is provided with the same respective
signature thereof in multiple signature types such that the same
signature is visible using multiple imaging modalities.

Claim 20 (Canceled).